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New England Emigrant Aid

company,

To the People of the United States.



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Book . N 53

To the People of the United States.

The Executive Committee of the New England Emigrant Aid Company respectfully ask your attention to the following facts.

In consequence of the errors and misrepresentations in regard to the Emigrant Aid Company of Massachusetts, contained in a Report made to the Senate of the United States by the Chairman of the Committee on Territories, March 12, 1856; and the repetition of the misstatements and apparent adoption of the conclusions of the Report by members of both houses of Congress, in their published speeches; the undersigned have been led to prepare a plain statement of the facts of the case, to expose the grave mistakes of the Report and of those who have adopted its erroneous views, and to place before the country a true account of the designs and objects of this association.

As most of the objections which have been urged in various quarters against this Company are collected and embodied in the Report, our purpose will be best attained by an examination of that document. We proceed therefore to notice some of its more prominent errors and misstatements.

I. There is no such "mammoth moneyed corporation," "with a capital of five millions of dollars," "to control the institutions of Kansas," as the Report supposes. There never has been such an one. The act quoted by the Report was passed by the Legislature of Massachusetts in 1854, but no complete organization ever took place under it, and it was soon abandoned. The New England Emigrant Aid Company, which is the only incorporated society in Massachusetts connected with the emigration to Kansas, was chartered in 1855. Its capital is limited by its charter to one million of dollars, but in point of fact the capital of the Company, actually paid in, has never exceeded one hundred thousand dollars.

II. The act of incorporation does not, as the Report suggests, make the State of Massachusetts a party to the proceedings of this Company. The design of a charter of incorporation, as is well known, is to enable an association of individuals to act together more conveniently and safely in the transaction of its business. A State granting a charter does not render itself responsible for the acts of the Company thereby created; and the State of Massachusetts, although doubtless approving of its objects, is no more accountable for the transactions of this Company than for those of the numerous Companies chartered by its Legislature for religious, educational, mining, manufacturing, or other purposes.

III. The Report attributes to the Company the origin of all the troubles in Kansas, by its "unauthorized and improper schemes of foreign inter-

ference with the internal affairs and domestic concerns of the Territory," and its "attempt to violate or circumvent the principles and provisions of the act of Congress for the organization of Kansas and Nebraska."

The fact is directly the reverse of what is here stated; and a regard for truth and justice should have led to a careful inquiry into the facts, before these assertions were made. This Company has never "interfered with the internal affairs of the Territory." It has never attempted to "violate or circumvent" any act of Congress. It has never, as a Company, opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

The Company was formed to aid in the permanent settlement of the Territory of Kansas by a free and intelligent population. In the prosecution of this purpose, it had reason to expect the approval and co-operation of Congress. It anticipated that, in accordance with the true intent of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, all citizens of the United States who should go to settle in Kansas, would receive the protection of the Government.

The Territory of Kansas cannot properly be spoken of as in any sense "foreign" to Massachusetts. Like the other Territories of the United States, it is the common property of all the States. It belongs to Massachusetts and Vermont, as well as to Missouri or Iowa. The citizens of every State have an equal right to go there, or to aid others to go, either individually or by means of associated capital. By the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the people of those Territories were left "perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way." Whatever may be the individual opinions of the members of this association as to the constitutionality, justice, or expediency, of this Act, the Company has accepted it as the law of the land until it should be repealed, and has never violated or evaded it. All its action, on the contrary, has been perfectly consistent with the principles and provisions of the law.

Upon the removal by Congress of all restriction upon the future institutions of Kansas, and the granting to actual settlers the right to determine their character, that Territory was regarded by all parties, both at the South and the North, as thrown open to free competition for settlement, by emigrants from all parts of the country. This fact has been recognised by leading men in the Southern States as well as at the North, and warm appeals have been made to the patriotism and moral sentiment, as well as to the interest and the political prejudices of all sections of the Union. These appeals find a ready response from the people. Public meetings of citizens have been held in many of the States, and societies formed, to aid in the settlement of the Territory, and to assist in the work of founding a new State.

The Report asserts that this Company was the first association formed to "control the institutions" of the new Territory; and assumes that the Southern Societies exist only as a "natural consequence" of its operations. But we have abundant evidence that, before the organization of this Company, associations were formed and in active operation in Missouri, to "interfere with the internal affairs" of the Territory, in a manner neither legal nor justifiable. Indeed, the existence of a wide-spread desire and intention, on the part of the Southern States, to use all practicable means to control the institutions of Kansas, has been so openly and repeatedly avowed, that it needs no proof. The whole charge therefore against this Company, that it has been the occasion of the difficulties in Kansas, on the ground of its assumed priority of action, is totally destitute of foundation.

This Company has employed associated capital, and organized under a charter, for the convenience of its business. But the use of associated

capital is a common principle of all societies, and has never, so far as we know, been objected to, except in the case of this Company; and the organization under a charter, so far from implying any design to "violate or circumvent" the law, is direct evidence of a contrary intent. It is, in fact, from the "improper and unauthorized" acts of unchartered and illegal societies, that the greatest danger to the institutions of Kansas has arisen.

Although the associations formed at the North have, no doubt, different objects and different methods of action from those of the Southern States, the rights of all of them are equal under the Act, so long as their proceedings are conformable to the laws. The citizens of the Southern States have not, in general, shown the same disposition with those of the North, to emigrate to Kansas, or to aid others to go there for permanent settlement; but they have fully recognised their right to do this, and declared their intention to exercise it. That they have failed to act more efficiently for this object, is not, perhaps, owing so much to the want of a desire to extend their peculiar institutions into the Territory, as to other causes.

While the objects and action of this Company are severely condemned by the Report, we find in it no censure of the "unauthorized and improper interference" of Southern Societies in the affairs of the Territory. Indeed, the language of the Report would lead to the inference that the Kansas-Nebraska Act was especially designed for the benefit of those individuals and societies who seek to render the institutions of Kansas congenial to those of Missouri. Their action is spoken of as simply "*defensive*," while that of the Massachusetts Company is characterized as "*aggressive*;" those therefore, it would seem, who favor the establishment of free institutions in Kansas, are guilty of acts of aggression; while those who aim to plant Slavery there, are acting only on the defensive, and are not liable to the charge of endeavoring to "violate or circumvent" the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

But whatever may be the views of the Report in regard to the design and effect of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the people of the United States will never sanction the doctrine that it was intended for the special benefit of Missouri. That State, although lying in immediate proximity to the Territory of Kansas, can have no other rights there than those which belong equally to every State of the Union. If the construction of the Act suggested by the Report is to be maintained, it becomes indeed "a question of fearful import" how far such legislation is "compatible with the rights and liberties of the people."

Since all the various Emigrant Aid Societies of the country have equal rights in the Territory of Kansas, no exception can be taken to the action of any one of them, so long as it confines itself to legitimate objects, and employs only just and lawful means to accomplish its ends.

The objects of the New England Emigrant Aid Company are just and lawful. The means which it employs are legal and proper. The disturbances in Kansas are attributed by the Report to the "unusual and extraordinary means" used "to stimulate an unnatural and false system of emigration," "with a view of controlling the elections in Kansas." A simple statement of the facts is a sufficient refutation of this error.

It was early perceived, by the originators of this Company, that a portion of the immense emigration, which every year seeks the West, from the Northern and Eastern States, might be directed towards Kansas. Information was eagerly sought for, in regard to its character and resources, and its adaptation to the wants of settlers. The Company obtained and supplied the needed information—facilitated the passage of those who wished to go, by aiding them to unite into parties, that they might make the journey more

conveniently and cheaply—and invested capital in the Territory in such enterprises as would be most useful to the newly arrived settlers. These are the only “unusual and extraordinary means” which it has employed.

It is well known that one of the chief difficulties which the settlers in a new country have to contend with, is the want of capital for the support of those undertakings to which the means of individuals are inadequate. It has been one of the first objects of the Company to supply this want, by the erection of hotels, mills, and machinery; by favoring the establishment of schools and churches; and by doing all in its power to surround the settlers, even on their first arrival, with the comforts of civilized and cultivated life. It was at the same time the belief of some of the originators of the Company, that such investments of capital, while in the highest degree useful to the emigrants, would also in the end prove profitable to the Company itself, as the population should increase, and the value of permanent property in the Territory be thereby enhanced. It must be apparent, therefore, that the whole plan of the Company's operations is based on the idea of a *permanent settlement* of the Territory. Its investments are made in property which has a permanent local value, but which would be worthless unless surrounded by an active and energetic population. It could be no part of its plan, therefore, to send persons to Kansas for a temporary residence there.

Neither does it offer inducements to any persons to emigrate, by paying for their passage to the Territory. It has, in fact, never paid the passage of an emigrant, believing that its funds could be more usefully applied to permanent investments in Kansas. The class of persons in New England who would have been induced to go by such means is not large, but still smaller, it is to be hoped, is the number of those who could be “hired” to go to Kansas, to remain there only temporarily, for the base and dishonest purpose of interfering with the elections in the Territory. The charge that this Company has sent emigrants the long journey of fifteen hundred miles, for the mere purpose of voting at elections, is therefore not only unjust, but absurd.

Those who have gone to Kansas under the auspices of this Company had the means to pay for the journey, and the ability and the will to work for the support of themselves and their families there. They have gone of their own accord, and at their own expense. The energy, perseverance, and honorable ambition, which lead them to forsake the comforts of civilized life, and seek a home in a distant and unsettled region, and which have enabled them to acquire the means for so doing, are precisely the qualities which render them the most valuable and desirable class of settlers for a new country. A few who went out without a sufficient acquaintance with the difficulties and hardships incident to pioneer life, became discouraged, and wished to return. But the number of these is small, compared with those who remain as permanent residents in the Territory.

This Company has made no conditions with the emigrants. All persons, whether from the North or the South, who wished to go to Kansas, and were able to pay for the passage, have been at liberty to join its parties. Its hope and desire are, that all who go should be and remain *bona fide* settlers. It asks no questions as to their political opinions. It exacts no pledge or promise, either express or implied, as to their conduct or vote. Such a pledge would be equally dishonorable to those who gave and to those who received it. They are free and independent citizens on the soil of Kansas, as they have been on that of Massachusetts or New Hampshire.

While entirely disclaiming, on the part of this Company, any improper

interference with the internal affairs of the Territory of Kansas, or any design to control the political or social conduct of its citizens, we have always hoped and expected that the emigrants who go out under its auspices would favor the establishment of free institutions there. It is for their interest to make Kansas a free State. The character of the men is, in itself, a sufficient guaranty that they will do so. They are men of industry and enterprise, who believe in hard work, and are accustomed to it. Such men cannot fail to carry with them, wherever they go, a love for the institutions which recognise the dignity of labor, and allow to every man the just reward of his toil. But the very independence of character which these institutions have fostered, would lead them to repel the slightest attempt on the part of this Company to exercise any control over their conduct.

We have sufficiently shown the method of proceeding of the Company which we represent. Societies formed in other sections of the Union have adopted different methods. Some associations have hired men to go to Kansas, have supplied them with arms, and proposed to support them in the Territory, for the avowed purpose of controlling the elections by violence and fraud, and by intimidation of the peaceable *bona fide* settlers. The disturbances in Kansas have been the "natural consequence" of these illegal acts, and it is both unjust and illogical to attribute them to the influence of a Company whose only object is to aid in the peaceable and permanent settlement of the Territory by legitimate means, rather than to the action of societies, the direct tendency of whose proceedings is to produce hostile collision and bloodshed.

IV. Another error of the Report is the statement that this Company has invested its capital in "cannon and rifles, in powder and lead, and in all the implements of war."

The assertion is utterly untrue. *The Company has never invested a dollar in cannon or rifles, in powder or lead, or in any of the implements of war.* It was established solely for peaceable and legal objects, and it has been no part of its plan to engage in any of the pursuits of war. The first emigrants who went to Kansas under its auspices were mostly unarmed, or provided only with such weapons as were intended for the ordinary purposes of pioneer life. They had no intention or expectation of being obliged to use them in any other way. They relied on the faith of the Government that actual settlers should be protected in their rightful occupation of the soil.

Subsequent events have shown that this reliance was unfounded. The Territory has been invaded at various times by armed men from the neighboring States, in defiance of law, and the inhabitants have been obliged to resort to such means of self-defence as they could obtain, for protection at the ballot-box, for the safety of their homes and families, and for the preservation of their towns and villages from destruction. So far as the facts have come to our knowledge, they have always used these means judiciously and well—never interfering with the rights of others, but ready and determined to maintain their own.

Their patience and forbearance under every species of provocation and insult, while they still hoped for a peaceful redress of their grievances by law; their wisdom and prudence under circumstances of unexampled trial and difficulty; and their brave and determined conduct on occasions when forbearance had ceased to be a virtue, and it had become necessary to repel violence by force, have commanded our respect and admiration. So long as they were exposed only to the attacks of lawless bands, acting without even the pretence of authority of the Government, they have been

able to defend themselves. But the intolerable wrongs and grievances which they now suffer, under color of law, call loudly upon the Government and the country for redress. The inhabitants of Kansas demand only justice, and protection for their rights as citizens and freemen. They have never designed to resist the execution of the laws of Congress, but, in their brave and uncompromising resistance to lawless invasion and violence, they stand on the broad principles of the inalienable right of self-defence, and the liberties guarantied to every citizen by the Constitution of the United States.

We believe that a full recognition of the principle that actual settlers should control the institutions of the Territory, and an acceptance by Congress of the Constitution and form of Government which they have chosen would be a full and complete remedy for all the evils under which they now labor.

V. The statements of the Report in regard to the supposed violence and hostility of Northern and Eastern emigrants, in passing through Missouri, are also erroneous. Although our communication with the citizens of Missouri, as well as those of Kansas, is frequent and direct, we have never known of an instance of the violence referred to. The Missouri river is one of the common highways of the nation, and its waters are as free to the citizens of all the States as those of the harbors of our Eastern coast. That the emigrants passing up that river to Kansas have expressed sentiments, on political and social questions, differing from those entertained by many of the citizens of Missouri, is perhaps true. Their right to entertain or express such sentiments cannot, certainly, be doubted. But we are sure that they have never committed any acts of violence or hostility, or interfered with the domestic institutions of that State. The inconveniences and annoyances, however, to which emigrants from the East are sometimes subjected, in their passage through Missouri, and the risk to life and property often encountered, have turned the attention of parties to other routes to Kansas, which will probably soon be completed by the extension of the lines of railroad now in process of construction through the State of Iowa. By the opening of these routes, the citizens of Missouri will probably be relieved in a great degree of their "apprehensions" of "danger" from the peaceable emigrants to Kansas.

VI. The views expressed in the Report, respecting this Company, are not those which are entertained by the citizens of Kansas. Every mail from the Territory brings us assurances of this fact. The inhabitants of that region do not attribute to us any design to control their political action, but they regard our investment of capital there as of great advantage to the settlers, and we have been constantly urged to make new investments to a greater extent than our resources have heretofore allowed.

The interest, however, which recent events have awakened in all portions of the country in the welfare of Kansas, has had the effect to increase the resources of the Company, and it intends to continue to make such investments, to the full extent of its means. The emigration to Kansas from all parts of the country still continues, stimulated no doubt by the action of Emigrant Aid Societies, both at the South and at the North. Experience has shown that the proceedings even of some of those whose views on the subject of the settlement of Kansas are antagonistic to our own, have essentially aided in the success of this Company. It has been found that a large number of the emigrants to Kansas, from the Southern

as well as from the Northern States, so soon as they have become permanent settlers, have recognised and desired to participate in the benefit of its operations.

The number of emigrants who have gone to Kansas under the direct auspices of this Company is not large, compared with the great numbers from the Northern and Western States who have been encouraged to go there by the knowledge of its transactions. The actual capital employed by the Company is much less than it is represented by the Report, amounting indeed to but a small part of the sum allowed by its charter. But it has suited the designs of those who oppose it, to make exaggerated statements of the character of its operations, and to misrepresent its purposes. It has done what it could, in a peaceable, legal, and constitutional way, to aid in the settlement of Kansas by a population of freemen. It will continue to exert all its influence to the accomplishment of that great end, without regard to misrepresentation and abuse, from whatever quarter they may come.

The number of the stockholders of this association now amounts to nearly one thousand, and is steadily increasing. Among its members are persons eminent for intelligence, moral character, and high social position and influence—men of every class and profession in life, and the representatives of every political party. No one, in a community where they are known, would venture to attribute to them any unjust or improper designs. But since, from a misapprehension of their motives, a Committee of the Senate of the United States has been led into grave errors in respect to them; and as such errors have been widely circulated and, if not corrected, may injuriously affect the interests of Kansas, we have thought it expedient to make this public denial of all the charges against this Company.

WILLIAM B. SPOONER,
J. M. S. WILLIAMS,
ELI THAYER,
S. CABOT, JR.,
R. P. WATERS,
L. B. RUSSELL,
C. J. HIGGINSON,
EDWARD E. HALE,

Executive Committee of the N. E. Emigrant Aid Co.

BOSTON, JUNE 17, 1856.

The officers of the Corporation chosen at the annual meeting, May 27th, 1856, are as follows, viz:

President—JOHN CARTER BROWN, of Providence, R. I.

Vice Presidents—ELI THAYER, of Worcester, Mass.; J. M. S. WILLIAMS, of Cambridge, Mass.

Treasurer—AMOS A. LAWRENCE, of Boston.

Assistant Treasurer—ANSON J. STONE, of Boston.

Secretary—THOMAS H. WEBB, of Boston.

Directors—Wm. B. Spooner, Samuel Cabot, Jr., M. D., John Lowell, Le Baron Russell, M. D., Charles J. Higginson, Samuel G. Howe, M. D.,

George B. Upton, Patrick T. Jackson, all of Boston; Wm. J. Rotch, New Bedford; J. P. Williston, Northampton; Wm. Dudley Pickman, Salem; R. P. Waters, Beverly; R. A. Chapman, Springfield; Charles H. Bigelow, Lawrence; Nathan Durfee, Fall River; Wm. Willis, Portland, Me.; Ichabod Goodwin, Portsmouth, N. H.; Thomas M. Edwards, Keene, N. H.; Albert Day, Hartford, Ct.; John Bertram, Salem; George Howland, Jr., New Bedford; Francis Wayland, D. D., Providence, R. I.; Edward Everett Hale, Worcester; Seth Padelford, Providence, R. I.; Samuel Boyd Tobey, M. D., Providence, R. I.; Prof. Benjamin Silliman, New Haven, Ct.; Horace Bushnell, D. D., Hartford, Ct.; Moses H. Grinnell, New York; Wm. Cullen Bryant, New York; Henry H. Elliott, New York; Edwin D. Morgan, New York; Henry C. Bowen, New York; Horace B. Claflin, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Edward W. Fiske, Brooklyn, New York; and J. L. Bailey, Philadelphia, Pa.

Executive Committee—Messrs. William B. Spooner, J. M. S. Williams, Eli Thayer, S. Cabot, Jr., M. D., R. P. Waters, Le Baron Russell, M. D., Charles J. Higginson, and E. E. Hale.

Attest:

THOMAS H. WEBB, *Secretary*.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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1856.



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